

Route 67 News



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Summer 2007

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Designed To Speed Construction

To add lanes to Route 67, much has been done before the first construction contract ever gets underway. In addition to surveying, deciding where to build the lanes, getting the necessary permits, and designing a safe roadway, there's also purchasing the needed land and removing anything on it.

With a 50-mile improvement area, there aren't that many clear spots along Route 67. The roadway is lined with trees, homes, businesses, utilities like power lines, and rock. MoDOT's project team had two big challenges before it: money and time.

"We don't have unlimited funding to make these improvements," says Transportation Project Designer David Wyman. "We have a portion of money in our construction program and money from partners such as the Route 67 Corporation. We're working to make the best and most needed improvements with what money is available."

MoDOT had also committed to having the improvements completed by 2012. With an already tight deadline, the project team knew it would have to take steps to ensure the projects keep progressing and the best bids for each are received. So, what's a team to do?

"Giving contractors a work area clear of trees, buildings and utilities helps get the best bids and expedite the grading and paving work," says Transportation Project Designer Jason Williams.

The answer was to award clearing and demolition contracts in advance of the grading and paving work. That's not really anything new for MoDOT, but the team says awarding those contracts before all the right of way was purchased is a new idea.

"It isn't the usual way of doing things, but with the cooperation of our design, environmental & cultural, right of way, construction, and maintenance departments, we've found a way to make it work with two of these clearing contracts already awarded," Williams says.

The idea is that contractors can begin work on each portion of land once MoDOT's right of way department and property owners come to an agreement. Instead of waiting for many miles of land to be purchased and a contract awarded, the contractor has already been awarded a contract and can get the work done as soon as the land is bought.

"It is imperative that utilities are relocated and structures demolished in a timely manner to keep construction on track," says MoDOT Construction Engineer Lynelle Luther. "These contracts have enabled us to offer a clean work area before a construction contract is ever awarded, thus bringing in lower bids and saving time."

Path To A Smoother 67

If you'll pardon the pun, it has been a long road for improvements on Route 67 south of Poplar Bluff. The highway has been plagued by water pumping underneath concrete, making repair patching a daily occurrence. And, that's plagued motorists with frequent potholes and the inconvenience the work zones necessary to fix them bring.

Drivers have recently gotten use to the work zones as a two-phase project to make repairs from one-half mile south of Route

160 to Arkansas has been underway. Last fall, work began on the first step to underseal the pavement to stop the water problems. The success of the project was less than celebrated.

"We were so happy that we'd found something to take care of the water problems," says Project Manager Eric Krapf. "But, I often tell people we then had to install signs that say you must be this tall to take this ride." Krapf says the humor doesn't diminish the very bumpy ride the undersealing brought those who travel the route. "It was rough," he continues, "and, we knew it would be, but it was a little surprising that the road was that rough."

The solution was to accelerate phase two of the repairs. After the undersealing was complete, the road was to be milled and repaved, with milling taking care of any uneven pavement and new asphalt providing a smooth surface. The resurfacing contract was accelerated and milling has been completed. Paving is currently underway. Krapf says the improvements are already felt.

"I drove over the southbound lanes after the milling," he says. "It was much improved, but I didn't realize quite how much until I came back on the northbound lanes that hadn't been ground yet."

Hopefully it's an improvement motorists have already noticed as well.

"Road work is always an inconvenience, and we're very thankful to those who travel the route for their patience and especially their caution while traveling through the work zones," says Krapf.

Route 67 drivers have shared the road for many months with orange cones; however, the work is expected to be completed by this fall, leaving smoother travel and work-zone free lanes for drivers.



Milling the pavement to prepare for resurfacing.

Extra, Extra: Latest On Greenville Park

Approval was recently given for the 6(f) conversion document for the Greenville City Park. Because of the Route 67 four-lane improvements, the park will need to be relocated. However, because it was originally built with federal funds, the replacement park had to be approved by the Department of Natural Resources and the U.S. Parks Services Department.

All who needed to sign off on the new park have. Now, MoDOT can reimburse the City the cost for the relocation, and Greenville can begin construction of its new city park.

In This Issue

Route 67 News

page South Of PB

page Speeding Things Up

page What's Next?

page Wappapello Bridge



Southeast District
2675 N. Main St., P.O. Box 160
Sikeston, MO 63801
1-888-ASK-MODOT (1-888-275-6636)
www.modot.org/southeast

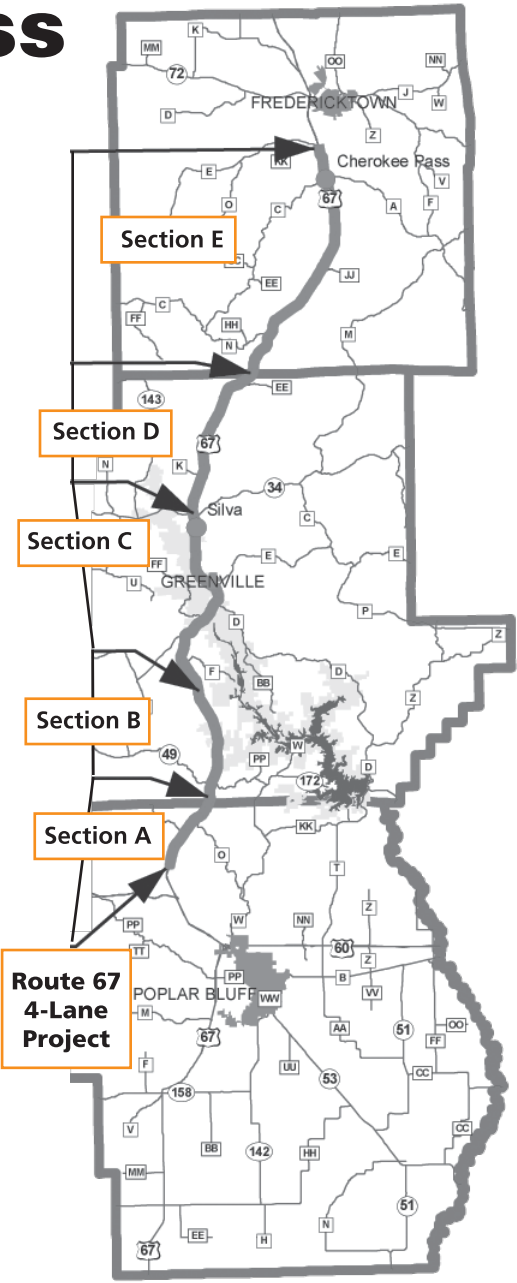
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The Projects & Progress

Work to build two additional lanes of Route 67 has been divided into five sections with individual projects included in each section. It's easy to get confused about what's happening and what's going to happen. The chart and map should give you an idea of what's coming your way, where it's located and when MoDOT will accept bids.

Job Number	Section	Description	Anticipated Letting
J0P0918	A	Grading, Route O to 4-lane	Complete
J0P0918A	A	Bridges, Route O to 4-lane	Complete
J0P0954	E	Demolition from south of Route E to Wayne County line	Aug. 2006
J0P0930D	B	Demolition from two miles south of Route F to Route O	Sept. 2006
J0P0931C	C	Demolition from Route 34 at Silva to two miles south of Route F	Sept. 2006
J0P0931A	C	Wappapello Lake Bridge	Feb. 2007
J0P0828 & 877 B	All	1st Phase of existing lanes rehab	Mar. 2007
J0P0931E	C	Clearing from Route 34 at Silva to two miles south of Route F	June 2007
J0P0930A	B	Bridges from two miles south of Route F to Route O	July 2007
J0P0928	E	Grading & paving from south of Route E to Wayne Co	Sept. 2007
J0P0930	B	Grading & paving from two miles south of Route F to Route O & paving for section A	Nov. 2007
J0P0931	C	Grading & paving from Route 34 @ Silva to two miles south of Route F	Feb. 2008
J0P0929	D	Grading & paving from Madison County line to 34 at Silva	May 2008
J0P0988	D	Silva Interchange	May 2008
J0P0931D	C	67 Corridor wetlands mitigation area	Jan. 2009
J0P0828 & 877	All	2nd phase of existing lanes rehab	Jan. 2010
J0P0931F	C	Wappapello Lake bridge demolition	Sept. 2010



A Word From the Hwy 67 Corporation

The corporation is made up of a group of community leaders and officials.

The City of Poplar Bluff and the Hwy 67 Corporation continue to work closely with MODOT in their cooperative efforts to complete the 50 miles of four lanes from Poplar Bluff to Fredericktown. This major highway improvement project remains on schedule to be completed no later than December 2012. The entire 50 miles is scheduled to be under construction by early summer 2008.

Thanks again to the citizens of Poplar Bluff for their approval of the one-half cent sales tax in April 2005 which makes this exemplary highway improvement project possible. The City collects and administers the appropriate distribution of the sales tax revenue. The Hwy 67 Corporation involved hundreds of local citizens and provided the leadership in the sales tax campaign to inform the citizens of the safety and economic benefits of four-laning Route 67 for Poplar Bluff and Butler County as well as for Wayne and Madison counties and northeast Arkansas. The Hwy 67 Corporation role now includes monitoring the progress, serving as an advisor to MoDOT and as the local liaison to the Poplar Bluff community.

The 50 miles of new construction will provide a vital link for Route 67 to eventually connect with Interstate 30 in Arkansas. This major thoroughfare would shorten the distance from Dallas to St. Louis and Chicago by approximately 80 miles. With fuel economy playing a major role for vehicular traffic, the Route 67 improvement project becomes even more important to the hundreds and thousands who travel north and south through middle America.

Thanks also to the continued efforts of Sen. Kit Bond and Rep. Jo Ann Emerson to secure additional funds for special-need projects along the 50-mile corridor and to ensure the US Army Corps of Engineers \$28 million share of the project will be available in a timely basis. Efforts are also being made to inform and include Sen. Claire McCaskill regarding the purposes and progress of the Route 67 project.

Wouldn't it be great to drive to and from work, go to a St. Louis Cardinals or Rams game or anywhere north of Poplar Bluff and be able to drive on a beautiful and safer four-lane highway? Thank you to all who help make this possible.

New Wappapello Lake Bridge

A new four-lane bridge at Wappapello Lake is in the works as part of the Route 67 project. Sen. Kit Bond visited recently to see the progress first hand before securing \$3 million in the Senate Appropriations Committee for its construction. The bill must still pass the full Senate before being signed into law.

As we watch the advancement of the bridge construction and the entire corridor, it's interesting to think about the existing bridge being replaced and those who watched as it was built.

Thanks to reporting from the *Wayne County Journal Banner* in 2001, the history of the bridge at Greenville and all those that came before it were uncovered.

Greenville was founded around 1819, and according the *Banner's* investigation, the first structure at the current site was a railroad bridge built by Hiram Holladay's Greenville, Williamsville & St. Louis Railway. The railroad was abandoned in 1918, and the bridge was converted for auto and wagon traf-

fic.

This bridge was replaced by a bridge built in 1930 by the state. In 1940, the State Highway Commission and the Corps of Engineers entered into an agreement to build a new bridge. The bridge construction was to take 500 days.

Now in 2007, construction is underway on yet

another bridge. Completion is expected in the summer of 2009. The bridge we construct today will be very different than what is there currently. With four lanes it will be a much wider bridge, representing a region whose transportation system is growing and the importance of Route 67 stretching from Illinois to the Gulf of Mexico.

Design and construction aren't the only things different about this bridge. The article by the *Banner* recalled a memory about being banned from swimming in the river during construction



of the bridge in 1941. And, while today's construction will limit some of the lake/river activities for safety, much effort has been put into the work by MoDOT and the Corps to reduce construction impacts to the park and its visitors. With nearly 225,000 visitors annually, the park and its amenities are just as important today to the region's economic development as highway expansion.

A new Route 67 will mark an easier and safer route for those visitors to reach their destination, and the bridge design took that into consideration as well with a pedestrian walkway added to continue that safety focus as part of the expanded highway.

Perhaps the most important feature of the new bridge is the leadership and dedication of those who will be using it that made it a reality. A safer bridge and highway made possible because citizens helped to pay for it, made possible because people sold homes or businesses for a place to locate it.

That's truly something for future generations to remember about the history of the latest bridge.

Maybe No Rhyme But Definite Reason

The schedule for work on the additional lanes for Route 67 is rolling along and will continue over the next several years. Likewise, you can expect to see things happening on the existing lanes to get ready for the four-lane.

One contract has already been awarded for that work with more

to follow. While there's still plenty of time before the four lanes are open, with so much work occurring on the corridor, the project team was concerned about having enough materials or higher prices that could delay the work.

"The solution was to do as much of the work in advance of the

four-lane opening as possible, while keeping in mind that the work couldn't happen too quickly or the existing lanes would have aged pavement on one side with brand new lanes on the other," says Resident Engineer Steve Bubanovich.

Drivers should remember that this is the first portion of improve-

ments to the existing lanes. Additional work will be done prior to the corridor completion.

"In some places it may look like a patchwork. There will be places with little shoulders, big shoulders or no shoulders because nothing will be done to the existing lanes in areas where we're constructing four new lanes," Bubanovich says.